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Public Policy and Mississippi Industrial Growth, 1865-1880

by

Mary Frances W. Dykes

Part I

Early Mississippians manifested little interest in the introduction of industry into their traditionally agricultural state. However, in the wake of the Panic of 1837, manufacturing enterprise began to meet with sporadic success within the state, not entirely without the encouragement of legislatures and governors. Consequently, Mississippi reached its first industrial peak in the period of recovery following the panic. Although cotton was still king and remained so until the coming of the Civil War, industrial growth in Mississippi from 1840 to 1860 was encouraging. The state's industrial production for that period increased more than twice the rate of population growth. At the same time, factory production in the rest of the United States had increased at about three times the rate of population growth. Unfortunately, however, the four years of the Civil War practically destroyed the state's industries, leaving to the postwar period a tremendous task of industrial reconstruction. The purpose of this study is to trace the story of postbellum industrial development in Mississippi. Here Mississippi's first serious effort to get its industrial hearings took place. Here, for the first time, the state government plunged into the task. It was in embryo a program quite similar to the B.A.W.I. program of today, and for that reason, bears retelling here.

The condition of capital goods and the general economy of the reconstruction era were critical barriers to the revival of industry in Mississippi. At the end of the Civil War, the railroads had been depleted almost to the point of extinction. Miles of track were destroyed, railway stations were gone, and bridges and trestles were torn away. In May, 1865, the New Orleans, Jackson, and Great Northern Railroad, with approximately one half of its mileage in Mississippi, had only three locomotives, three passenger cars, one baggage car and eighteen freight cars remaining, of the forty-five locomotives, thirty-seven passenger cars, ten baggage and express cars, and five hundred three freight and handcars it had possessed in 1861. The Mississippi and Tennessee Railroad, almost exclusively a Mississippi enterprise, had lost eighty-one cars. The condition of the Mobile and Ohio Rail-

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road was no less appalling. All of its bridges and buildings from Union City, Tennessee to Okolona, Mississippi -- 184 miles -- lay in ruins. Few passenger coaches of the Mississippi Central Railroad were left.¹

The dilapidated railroads could not provide the transportation necessary to the rapid reconstruction and expansion of industry. The uncertain value of the currency was an additional handicap to speedy economic development. The early postwar circulating medium of local issue consisted chiefly of "cotton notes" with a face value of about \$4,000,000, the redemption value of which was uncertain, and notes issued by several railroads by permission of the legislature. The government of Mississippi was operated for ten years after the close of the war on a credit basis by means of "warrants", or promises to pay when revenue was available, the cash value of which ranged from about forty to ninety-nine cents on the dollar.² Added to those problems of reconstruction was the uncertainty that lasted until 1867 concerning the kind of political treatment to expect from the hands of the victorious enemy. Mississippians were subjected to considerable political anxiety before and after the close of the war. In 1865 the Mississippi Legislature was suddenly dissolved, and Governor Charles Clark was imprisoned as a result of a Federal order. The state was then without a recognized civil government. In a short time, however, William L. Sharkey was appointed provisional governor of Mississippi by President Johnson. The military authorities often disregarded civil law and further complicated matters by placing Negro troops in many of the larger towns for the purpose of keeping order. That act was bitterly resented by the white Mississippians. Most of the white citizens, however, accepted the situation and devoted their energies to their economic improvement.³

In 1865 Benjamin H. Humphreys, a native Mississippian, became governor of Mississippi under the Johnson Plan of Reconstruction. Immediately thereafter the leaders of the state directed their attention to the urgent matters of public education, governmental reorganization, and support of disabled Confederate soldiers and dependents of deceased soldiers.⁴ Some corporate charters were granted by the first reconstruction legislature, but no program of encouragement for depleted industry was forthcoming.

In December, 1865 the Mississippi Legislature granted a charter to the Pearl River Manufacturing Company, authorizing a capital stock of

¹Robert C. Black III, *The Railroads of the Confederacy*, (New York, 1952), 290; Riley, *Mississippi*, 282; Garner, *Reconstruction*, 143, 145.

²Garner, *Reconstruction*, 130-131.

³Riley, *Mississippi*, 290, 283.

⁴*Ibid.*, 290, 300.

\$100,000, and one to the Enterprise Manufacturing Company which was capitalized at \$500,000. Subscription for stock to the latter company was payable in money or in cotton. The company was authorized to establish a factory at any point in Clarke County for the purpose of making cotton and woolengoods. The Pearl River Manufacturing Company, in addition to the right to make cotton and woolen yarns and fabrics, was given authority to produce various other goods such as cotton seed and lard oil, flour, meal, cotton and iron machinery, to saw lumber, and to produce woodwork. The charter was to remain in force for fifty years. It provided that the capital stock and all property and assets of the company "shall be liable to such taxes as shall be imposed by the legislature." The factory was to be located in Hinds County.⁵

In November, 1865 two oil and mining companies were incorporated. Those charters apparently represented the first tangible effort to search for petroleum deposits in Mississippi. That interest had undoubtedly been stimulated by Colonel Edwin Drake's original discovery well, dug only six years earlier, near Titusville, Pennsylvania. The Mississippi and Alabama Oil and Mining Company, the capital stock of which was not to exceed \$300,000, was given the right for twenty years to possess lands, mines, and personal property, and to mine coal, oil, and other minerals. The Mississippi Pioneer Petroleum Mining Company had a larger capital stock of \$500,000. It had authority "to erect all necessary buildings, engines, machinery, and fixtures to mine, forge, smelt, roll, refine, manufacture and vend" all products of the enterprise. Upon the location, in Mississippi or elsewhere, of oil, coal, iron, or any other mineral or substance known to commerce, a separate and specialized branch of the company could be organized and granted the same rights as the original company possessed.⁶

In 1866 the Eastport Oil, Mining and Manufacturing Company of Iuka was granted a thirty-year charter to bore for oil, salt or other products of the earth, mine for minerals, and engage in the manufacture of those materials. The company had the right to hold real estate with a maximum value of \$300,000, and it had a capital stock not to exceed that same figure.⁷ The next year saw the incorporation of the Mississippi Mining and Manufacturing Company of Jackson, with authorized capital stock of \$100,000. The company had the right to manufacture all kinds of glassware, paints, hydraulic cement, and other merchandise derived from minerals or earth.⁸

⁵ Mississippi, *Laws*, 1865, 380-381; 447-450.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 365; 375-376.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1866-1867, 205-208.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 478-481.

Five companies were granted charters in 1866 to manufacture textiles and various other products. By that year, J. M. Wesson, whose mills at Bankston had been destroyed by Federal troops in 1864, had selected the new site of Wesson in Copiah County as the location for the reestablishment of the Mississippi Manufacturing Company. The charter granted in 1866 was to supplant all acts passed theretofore concerning that company. There was authorized a capital stock of \$500,000 which could be increased to \$1,000,000. The company was to manufacture cotton, wool, wood, iron, brass, lumber, flour and meal. Agencies for the sale of the manufactured goods could be established anywhere in the state. Property of the company was all classed as real estate for the purpose of taxation. Another enterprise receiving a charter with the same amount of capital stock was the Chatawa Water Power and Manufacturing Company at Chatawa in Pike County. The factory was to manufacture cotton, wool, wood, brass, iron, paper, flour, meal, and lumber by steam, water, or other power. That company was also given the privilege of establishing its own agencies anywhere in the state for the sale of goods. Its property was also liable for taxation on the same basis as real estate. The Marshall Manufacturing Company in Marshall County and the Summit Manufacturing Company in Pike County, each with an authorized capital stock of \$100,000, were granted rights to manufacture woolen and cotton yarns and fabrics, cotton seed and lard oil, flour, meal, lumber, cotton and iron machinery and wood work. The capital stock, property, assets, and income of the Marshall Manufacturing Company was liable for taxes, imposed by the legislature, not to exceed the rate of taxation on real property in the state. The Leesburg Manufacturing Company of Leesburg (Ellisville), Davis (Jones) County, also with a capital stock of \$100,000, was authorized to build a cotton and wool manufacturing mill. The company was given the privilege of establishing a foundry and machine shop necessary to keep the machinery of the company in running order.⁹

Early in 1867 Congress passed the infamous reconstruction acts. As provided by those acts, the Southern states were divided into five military districts. The Radical Plan also forbade voting privileges to any person who had voluntarily given aid or comfort to the Confederate cause. Thus many of the more able and influential white citizens of Mississippi were disfranchised and allowed to take no further part in the work of political reconstruction.¹⁰ By that time the Johnson-Plan Mississippi Legislature, then functioning for almost two years, had apparently begun to look with favor on public policies that encouraged industry. Although nonindustrial interests had absorbed most of their attention immediately following the war, by 1867 some measures friendly to industry had been passed. The Mississippi American Industrial Agency was formed to aid in the development of manufacturing, mining, and agriculture in Mississippi and in other states. The agency had authority to make loans to railroad companies, planters, and manufacturers on terms

⁹*Ibid.*, 176-178; 83-84; 172-174; 188-191; 191-194.

¹⁰Garner, *Reconstruction*, 172,174; Riley, *Mississippi*, 356,292-297.

more favorable than such loans were made at banks. A rate of only one percent interest could be charged on money loaned. The amount of capital stock of the agency was not specified. Fifty percent of the capital stock, however, was to be used for making loans and fifty percent was to be held in reserve. The agency was chartered for thirty years. Another act designed to encourage manufacturing was the incorporation of the Mississippi Agricultural, Educational, and Manufacturing Aid Society, the purpose of which, in addition to the encouragement of manufacturing and agriculture, was to aid in raising funds for the education of destitute orphans in the state. The Society had the right to offer premiums of land, books, scientific instruments, other valuable or useful property, or money prizes for the best essay on agriculture, manufactures, or education. Similar prizes could be offered for the best work of art or the most useful invention in mechanics or science produced by a Mississippi citizen. The organization was subject to an annual tax of \$1000. With a capital stock of \$100,000 it was chartered for twenty-five years and had the privilege of establishing offices at Natchez, Holly Springs, Columbus, Meridian, Hernando, and at any other place in Mississippi.¹¹

A considerable number of charters were granted in 1867 by the Mississippi Legislature to corporations organized for the purpose of manufacturing textiles and various other articles. The Davis' Mills Cotton Manufacturing Company in Marshall County, and the Copiah Manufacturing Company in Copiah County were the largest enterprises chartered that year. Each had a capital stock of \$500,000. The Copiah Company was given authority to manufacture wood, brass, iron, and grain in addition to cotton and woolen goods. The capital stock, property, assets, and income of the Davis' Mills were subject to taxation imposed by the legislature not to exceed the rate on real estate. The Desoto, the Baldwyn, and the Raymond and Hinds County manufacturing companies, with capital stocks of \$300,000, \$250,000, and \$200,000 respectively, ranked next in size among the corporations chartered in 1867. Those enterprises were granted authority to manufacture woolen and cotton yarns and fabrics, articles of wood, iron, brass, lumber, meal and flour.¹²

Nine other textile manufacturing companies with capital stocks ranging from \$100,000 down to \$10,000 were chartered in 1867. The Parksville Manufacturing Company in Lauderdale County and the Okolona Manufacturing Company were authorized to manufacture cotton and woolen goods, brass, iron, lumber, flour and meal by steam, water or horse power. On Hashuqua Creek in Noxubee County was the location of the Hashuqua Manufacturing Company which was incorporated to manufacture cotton and woolen yarns and fabrics, flour, meal, lumber, cotton and iron machinery, and woodwork.

¹¹ Mississippi, *Laws*, 1866-1867, 659-665; 349-354.

¹² *Ibid.*, 272-274; 494-495; 280-281; 518-519; 656-659.

The establishment received the right to erect storehouses and offer goods for sale. Its capital stock, property and assets were liable for such taxes as the legislature should impose. The Water Valley Manufacturing Company was granted the right to build factories in Yalobusha and Lafayette counties for the production of cotton and woolen goods, for making machinery for manufacturing purposes, for producing rolling stock for use on railroads, and for making agricultural implements. The Meridian Manufacturing Company and the Ravena Manufacturing Company of Adams County were both authorized to manufacture cotton and woolen yarns and fabrics. The Meridian enterprise could also grind meal and flour and could saw lumber. The Ravena Company was authorized to engage in the making of paper, cottonseed oil, iron and woodwork, and to run a cotton gin in addition to its textile production. Of the textile manufacturing companies chartered in 1867, the three having the smallest capital stock were the Bankston Manufacturing Company in Choctaw County, the Pelahatchie and Fannin Company in Rankin County and the French Camp Manufacturing Company in Attala County. The Bankston enterprise could accept cotton or land in return for stock provided the subscribers paid in advance five dollars for each share bought. It was authorized to produce cotton and woolen yarns and fabrics, to grind meal and flour and to saw lumber. The Pelahatchie and Fannin Company, in addition to the right to engage in the same activities as the Bankston Company, could also produce cotton and iron machinery and woodwork of various types. The French Camp Company, with a capital stock of only \$10,000, could operate a steam saw, grist and flour mill, and it could also produce cotton and woolen fabrics. It was granted the authority to hire any number of description of laborers in the manufacture of goods or for repair work.¹³

At Handsboro in Harrison County was located the Bradford Machinery Company. It was incorporated in 1867 with a capital stock of \$100,000 and with the authority to maintain a foundry for the making of all descriptions of engines, machinery, wares and merchandise. The property of the company was liable for taxes imposed by the legislature. In the same year the legislature granted a charter to the Mississippi and Alabama Turpentine Company to manufacture turpentine and lumber "and all things that can be made of either." To encourage production the legislature removed the state tax of two dollars per gallon on the capacity of each still, an assessment which had been levied in 1865 on turpentine distilleries.¹⁴

In accordance with a military order of General E. O. C. Ord, the Black and Tan Convention convened in Jackson on January 6, 1868 and remained in session until May 18 of that year. The expenses of that extravagant

¹³*Ibid.*, 511-512; 487-488; 709-712; 695-699; 533-536; 578-579; 530-532; 305-307; 670-675.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 471-473; 302-303; 28.

body amounted to one fourth of a million dollars. The constitution drawn up by the convention was at first rejected by the voters of Mississippi. After it was rejected, the civil government of the state was practically abolished by the Federal military authorities, and the legislature was not convened in 1868 or in 1869. Hence it had no real opportunity to reveal its attitude toward industry in those two years.¹⁵ The Democratic Party in the state had won an empty victory in its defeat of the Radical constitution.

Governor Benjamin G. Humphreys was expelled from office by Union soldiers in June, 1868. Adelbert Ames, a native of Maine, was appointed military governor of Mississippi to succeed Humphreys. Governor Ames was given absolute control of the civil and military government of Mississippi by Congress on February 16, 1869. On November 30 and December 1, 1869, the constitution was finally adopted, with the exception of certain objectionable clauses, and James L. Alcorn was elected governor of the state. The Radical legislature met in January, 1870, and chose two United States senators who were soon seated, thus signifying the readmission of Mississippi into the Union.¹⁶

Clauses of the Constitution of 1869 dealing with corporations were not particularly encouraging to industrial development. According to the Constitution, the property of all corporations was "subject to taxation in the same manner and to the same extent as similar property owned by private individuals." All property was to be taxed in proportion to its value. Under the revenue act of 1870, a tax of five mills was levied upon the value of all property including stock in incorporated companies in Mississippi.¹⁷

James L. Alcorn, the first elected governor of Mississippi under the Constitution of 1869, did all he could to relieve the suffering caused by reconstruction in Mississippi. In his inaugural address, March 10, 1870, he stated that "our taxation may be, after the employment of the most zealous economy, extraordinarily large. Its application will, however, tend not to impoverish us, but to enrich us; for it will be directed to develop the productive powers of the State." In that address he manifested his great interest in the sound economic progress of Mississippi. He said:

¹⁵ Garner, *Reconstruction*, 185-190; 203, 269. During that period the military governor, Adelbert Ames, issued charters of incorporation. It is presumed that Ames, by executive or military order, also specified any general public policy in regard to industry. The Mississippi Executive Journal of the time, however, reveals neither charters of incorporation nor orders in regard to industry in general. For the legislative confirmation and amendment in 1871 of Ames' charter granted to the Sardis Agricultural and Mechanical Society of Mississippi, see Mississippi, *Laws*, 1871, 632-637.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 214; 245-246; 277, 269.

¹⁷ Rhodes, *History of Taxation*, 45, 57.

All classes of our society are interested in the wise employment of our capital. The surplus income which had been absorbed of old in the purchase of labor will henceforth aggregate into large accumulations. Domestic capital will thus, for the first time in our history, become an element in the State; and even already shows signs of its presence in the numerous projects presenting themselves for its employment. The restless activity which the public mind begins to develop in that direction is a cause of apprehension, and suggests that the wisest and severest scrutiny be applied in dealing with projects which may involve the absorption of our active capital. In fact, a mania of speculation threatens us; and, if we do not treat it with firmness and foresight, may, as it ever has done elsewhere, not only plunge us into financial disaster, but may result in such bitter disappointments to individuals of enterprise, as to leave behind it, for many years, a heavy discouragement upon measures of even healthy progress.¹⁸

The legislature of 1870 supported several measures designed to stimulate industrial progress. Three associations for the encouragement of manufacturing were incorporated that year. The counties of Carroll, Attala, and Jefferson had such associations, the purpose of which was to hold annual county fairs in order to excite interest in agriculture, mechanics, and manufacturing. The Jefferson County Planters, Mechanics, and Manufacturing Association, with a capital stock of \$100,000, was chartered for thirty years. In the case of the Attala County Association, and apparently in all cases, the real estate and buildings used as fair grounds and for exhibition purposes were exempt from state taxes.¹⁹

In 1870 charters were granted to a number of enterprises, the owners of which were brave enough to attempt operations under the none too encouraging constitution and state laws. The North Mississippi Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company, with a capital stock of \$500,000, was located at Corinth and was granted a charter without the governor's approval.²⁰ The

¹⁸ Mississippi, *House Journal*, 1870, 58-62.

¹⁹ Mississippi, *Laws*, 1870, 530-531; 459-460; 480-482.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 438-440; Mississippi, *Senate Journal*, 1870, 307. The act which granted a charter to the North Mississippi Cotton and Woolen Manufacturing Company became a law by operation of the Constitution. The bill passed both houses of the legislature, but was not approved by the governor and was not returned to either house within five days after it had been presented to him.

company was given authority to manufacture cotton and woolen yarns and fabrics, cottonseed and lard oil, oil cake, flour, meal, lumber, cotton and iron machinery, woodwork, glass and earthenware. Capital stock invested in the company was to be in one hundred dollar shares. A person was allowed to own only one share of stock in the enterprise. The Canton Cotton Company of Madison County was incorporated to carry on a general cotton mill business, such as ginning, spinning and weaving cotton and manufacturing cottonseed oil and oil cake. The minimum amount of capital stock of the company was to be \$80,000 in gold. The Davis' Mills Cotton Manufacturing Company, first chartered in 1867, was granted a supplementary charter in 1870 that granted permission to produce woolen yarns and fabrics, cottonseed oil, lard oil, flour, meal, iron castings, and woodwork. The Carroll County Manufacturing Company, chartered in 1850, was authorized to change the corporate name to the Carrollton Manufacturing Company and to increase its capital stock to \$750,000. The Iuka and Stonewall manufacturing companies, each with capital stock of \$100,000, and the Perkinsville Manufacturing Company, with a capital stock of \$60,000, were chartered to produce all or several of the following items: cotton and woolen fabrics, cottonseed oil and oil cake, woodwork, iron and cotton machinery, flour and meal. The Austin Manufacturing Company was given the right to engage in a general manufacturing business in Tunica County. Apparently the Grand Gulf Manufacturing Company, chartered in 1870, was authorized to carry on a general manufacturing business. The Winchester Mills Company was incorporated for the business of sawing lumber, manufacturing articles of wood, cotton, wool, iron or earth, and constructing houses, wagons, and agricultural machinery. A fertilizer and oil cake factory, known as the Vicksburg Manufacturing Company, with a capital stock of \$100,000, was chartered in 1870. The oil, oil cake, and fertilizer made from cottonseed and other oleaginous and fibrous substances were to be manufactured for domestic and foreign markets.²¹

The Constitution of 1869 provided for a Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture whose purpose was mainly to encourage farm laborers to come to Mississippi. However, industry also was to benefit from the stimulated flow of immigrants. In a message to the Mississippi Senate and House of Representatives on May 26, 1870, Governor Alcorn expressed his convictions concerning a Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture. He explained that the state was in no condition financially to send a commissioner to Europe or elsewhere in search of immigrants. He did, however, favor the selection of a state commissioner to assist in the direction of immigrants after they had entered the country. He stated that "When we shall have shown that the stories he hears of the pistol and the knife of Ku Klux violence, and of murderous broil, are false," and when he feels that wages and equality before the law are secure for him, "the sturdy workman of the North and of Europe

²¹Mississippi, *Laws*, 1870, 189-190; 532; 435-436; 460-462; 194-195; 185-186; 553-554; 394-395; 369-370.

will consider earnestly the question of coming to Mississippi." In closing his message to the legislature, Governor Alcorn urged the passing of a law defining the duties of a Commissioner of Immigration and Agriculture; then, he advised the selection of a competent official for the position.²²

Mississippi industry, after having suffered almost total destruction during the Civil War, had revived somewhat by 1870. In the number of establishments and employees, value of production, capital investment, and percentage of the population employed in Mississippi industry in 1870, the state had registered noticeable increases since 1860. That growth is even more striking when it is remembered that almost all the industrial stature had been gained within the last half of the decade instead of the usual rise in elevation over a ten-year period. In 1870 Mississippi had 755 more employees than in 1860. There was a ten year increase of \$1,564,071 in value of goods produced and a small increase of \$120,222 in capital invested. The ratio of population employed in industry had increased 0.12 percent since 1860. The state's industry, however, when compared to national industrial growth was lower than in 1860; in fact, according to the census, Mississippi's industrial status in 1870 in relation to the other states was at the lowest mark it had reached since the state experienced its first "industrial peak" in 1840.²³

The factor which showed the greatest decrease relative to the rest of the country during the 1860-1870 decade was the state's average investment per establishment. In 1870 the Mississippi figure was \$2,600 or only 30.8 percent of the \$8,450 average of the other states. In 1860 the Mississippi figure was \$4,490 or 62.4 percent of the \$7,200 for the rest of the United States. That ratio was a 51 percent reduction from the 1860 figure. Mississippi's average investment per capita had also decreased relatively. The state's average for 1870 was \$5.43 or 9.7 percent of the \$56 national figure. That represented a 43 percent drop from the 1860 ratio of 16.9 percent for Mississippi. The state's average capital investment per industrial worker of \$757 or 73.5 percent of the \$1,030 average for the other states in 1870 was a decrease of 38 percent from the 1860 figure of 119 percent of the rest of the nation. The average production per capita for Mississippi in 1870 was \$9.85 or 8.8 percent of the \$112 average production per capita figure for the rest of the nation. That marks a decrease of 35 percent from Mississippi's 13.6 percent of the national average in 1860. There was a relative reduction of 30 percent in the average industrial production per employee in Mississippi. In 1870 the Mississippi figure was \$1,373 or 66.6 percent of the \$2,062 for the other states, while in 1860, the Mississippi figure had been 95.8 percent of the rest of the nation. Mississippi's average number of workers per establishment showed the least decrease. The state's figure of 3.43 persons or 42 percent of the 8.2 average workers per establishment for the rest of the

²² Mississippi, *House Journal*, 1870, 38-40.

²³ Table I, 11; Table II, 12.

states in 1870 was only a 20 percent drop from the 52.3 percent ratio of 1860.²⁴ Between 1860 and 1870, Mississippi's average investment per establishment and average capital investment per capita fell behind the national pace by approximately one half, while the state's average capital investment per worker, the average production per capital and the average production per employee, maintained only approximately two thirds the increases of the rest of the nation. Mississippi's average increase in number of employees per establishment fell behind the national increase by only one fifth.

Mississippi's industrial growth for the decade 1860-1870 had increased at about twice the rate of the population increase. In the same period, factory production in the United States increased at about ten times the rate of population growth. Therefore Mississippi's growth industrially showed absolute gains, but it represented only about one fifth the rate of gain registered in the rest of the nation including the other ten ex-Confederate states. These facts seem quite adverse, but they cover the Civil War Period and are, therefore, not too surprising. Obviously, the industrial growth in the 1865-1870 period was much greater absolutely and relatively than it was for the entire decade.

²⁴Table II, 12.

TABLE I
MISSISSIPPI INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, 1840-1880

Year	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880
Number of Establishments	1,700	877	976	1,731	1,479
Number of Employees	4,151	3,173	4,775	5,941	5,827
Value of Production in Dollars	1,428,585	2,972,038	6,590,687	8,154,758	7,518,302
Capital Investment in Dollars	1,797,727	1,833,420	4,381,492	4,501,714	4,797,600
Percent Pop. Employed in Industry	1.11	0.52	0.60	0.72	0.51

Sources: U. S. Census

TABLE II

Industrial Statistics: Mississippi and the Rest of the United States, 1840-1880

YEAR	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880
<u>Average Production per Employee</u>					
Mississippi	\$ 344	\$ 937	\$1,380	\$ 1,373	\$ 1,290
Rest of U. S.	\$ 470	\$1,068	\$1,440	\$ 2,062	\$ 1,966
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	73.2%	87.7%	95.8%	66.6%	65.7%
<u>Average Production per Capita</u>					
Mississippi	\$ 3.80	\$ 4.90	\$ 8.34	\$ 9.85	\$ 6.64
Rest of U. S.	\$22.15	\$44.70	\$61.30	\$112.00	\$109.50
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	17.20%	10.9%	13.60%	8.80%	6.06%
<u>Average Capital Investment per Employee</u>					
Mississippi	\$ 433	\$ 569	\$ 918	\$ 757	\$ 812
Rest of U. S.	\$ 337	\$ 556	\$ 769	\$ 1,030	\$ 1,020
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	128.0%	122.0%	119.0%	73.5%	79.6%
<u>Average Capital Investment per Capita</u>					
Mississippi	\$ 4.79	\$ 3.03	\$ 5.54	\$ 5.43	\$ 4.17
Rest of U. S.	\$15.92	\$23.25	\$32.80	\$ 56.00	\$ 56.90
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	30.10%	13.00%	16.90%	9.70%	7.33%
<u>Average Employees per Establishment</u>					
Mississippi	2.44	3.62	4.90	3.43	3.94
Rest of U. S.	7.57	7.76	9.36	8.20	10.80
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	32.30%	46.70%	52.30%	42.00%	36.50%
<u>Average Investment per Establishment</u>					
Mississippi	\$1,057	\$2,090	\$4,490	\$ 2,600	\$ 3,200
Rest of U. S.	\$2,557	\$4,320	\$7,200	\$ 8,450	\$11,900
Mississippi ratio to rest of U. S.	41.3%	48.4%	62.4%	30.8%	26.9%

Sources: U. S. Census

What Is Interstate Commerce?

A REVIEW OF FEDERAL COURT DECISIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MINIMUM WAGE CASES

by

R. T. Sawyer

The clause in the Constitution upon which federal national regulation of commerce is founded is one that reads: "The Congress shall have power... to regulate commerce with foreign nations, among the several States, and with the Indian tribes."¹ This is the famed "commerce clause." During a century of judicial interpretation, this provision has given Congress an authority broad enough to regulate a tremendous part of the economy of the nation. No longer can the individual states take comfort in the tenth amendment, with its specification that the central government shall have only those powers delegated to it. The Supreme Court has seen to it that these delegated powers are amplified sufficiently to grant Congress and the President almost unlimited power to tax and control business, and even to set up federal business enterprises.

The original intent of the framers of the constitution in granting the commerce power appeared to have been only to remedy the vital defect in the Articles of Confederation that permitted states to interfere with interstate trade. "Commerce" to the men of 1787 referred to the exchange of goods through *purchase and sale*. The framers' grant of power, however, was in such broad terms that its meaning has lent itself readily to almost limitless expansion.

Chief Justice John Marshall, staunch nationalist that he was, accomplished the first major expansion of the commerce clause in 1824. In the famous case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*² Marshall held that "commerce" included not only the buying and selling of commodities, but also *commercial intercourse...in all its branches*. Congress thus found a constitutional basis for control over the carrying of passengers and information from state to state. *Gibbons v. Ogden* dealt only with control of navigation and transportation by steamships, but it opened the way to national regulation of railroads, busses, automobiles, telephone and telegraph, radio, and airplanes whenever these cross state lines.

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¹U. S. Constitution, Art. I, Sec. 8 (3).

²9 Wheaton 1 (1824).

Beginning in the 1890's, the Court insisted upon drawing a sharp line between *commerce and production*. In 1895, for instance, it refused to permit the application of the national laws prohibiting monopoly to the manufacturing of sugar,³ and in 1918 it held that Congress could not regulate production by barring from interstate commerce goods made by child labor. When the attempt was made to limit child labor in factories by excluding the products of such labor from interstate commerce, the Supreme Court held, in *Hammer v. Dagenhart*,⁴ that this was a regulation of manufacturing, which is not commerce, under the guise of the commerce power. It was stated that the power to regulate commerce did not include the right to forbid commerce in particular commodities, unless such commodities were in themselves harmful; for example, lottery tickets and liquor. The Court was not impressed with the argument that there was an essential similarity in the injury done to children employed in manufacturing articles otherwise harmless and the injury done to the consumer of harmful articles. In the *Dagenhart* case, the injury occurs before the articles have been placed in interstate commerce. The case was decided by a five-four division of the Court, but public opinion on the question was perhaps divided in reverse proportions. Mr. Justice Holmes' famous dissent carried the day with most of the subsequent writers on the subject.

Having been thwarted in 1918 in its attempt to employ the commerce power against child labor, Congress in 1919 made another attempt to restrict child labor in the states, this time relying upon its power to tax. Congress levied a 10 percent tax upon the net profits of all firms and establishments which knowingly employed children below certain specified ages in factories, mills, and similar industrial establishments. This act was declared unconstitutional on the ground that it was more of a penal statute than a revenue measure.⁵ None of the above-mentioned cases referred to minimum wages as such, but they do serve as a preliminary definition of interstate commerce.

The authority of Congress to enact labor laws for the protection of women and children in the territory over which it has sole jurisdiction is fundamentally the same as that which may be exercised in the states by state and congressional authority combined. But here again there are constitutional limits. For example, the "due process" clause of the fifth amendment may stand in the way, as it did when Congress enacted a minimum wage law for women and children in the District of Columbia, only to find that the Supreme Court held this to be a deprivation of liberty (insofar as it applied to adult women) within the meaning of that clause.⁶

³United States v. E. C. Knight Co., 156 U. S. 1 (1895).

⁴247 U. S. 251 (1918).

⁵Bailey v. Drexel Furniture Company, 259 U. S. 20 (1922).

⁶Adkins v. Children's Hospital, 261 U. S. 525 (1923).

Now the Supreme Court no longer holds that Congress or the state legislatures in enacting wage and hour laws for women and children are depriving them and those who would employ them of the liberty of contract under the "due process" clause of the fifth or fourteenth amendments. In 1937 those earlier decisions were explicitly overruled in *West Coast Hotel v. Parrish*.⁷

The Government Contracts Act of 1936 prohibited the employment of boys under sixteen and girls under eighteen years of age by any company fulfilling a contract with the federal government. The Jones Sugar Act of the following year excluded from the benefits of a subsidy any beet grower who "utilized" children under fourteen, except where the parents owned at least 40 per cent of the crop. Encouraged by the broader definitions given by the Supreme Court in 1937 to the term "interstate commerce," Congress inserted a child labor provision as well as minimum wage provisions in the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

The 1938 act was a far more ambitious undertaking than earlier laws. Passed by Congress after invalidation of the N. R. A. codes had upset the New Deal's efforts to regulate labor standards throughout industry, the law applied to all workers in fields in or *affecting* interstate commerce. It set for these workers a 40-hour maximum week (without overtime) and a 75¢ minimum wage, this latter figure having replaced the original 40¢ minimum as a result of action by the Eighty-First Congress (1949) in the interest of meeting post-war inflation. The act also prohibited the hiring of child labor by employers covered by its provisions.

The question of the constitutionality of the main provisions of the act of 1938 was presented to the Supreme Court in two cases, which were decided in 1941. The first of these, *United States v. Darby*⁸ was an appeal from a judgment of a federal district court in Georgia sustaining a demurrer to an indictment which charged the defendant with having violated Section 15(a)(2) of the act by failing to pay the statutory minimum wage and statutory overtime compensation to persons employed in the production of lumber which was being produced largely on orders received from out-of-state customers, and Section 15(a)(1), which prohibits shipment of goods produced in violation of the act.

The district court had quashed the entire indictment on the ground that the act was an unconstitutional federal regulation of manufacture. On appeal, the Supreme Court, in an opinion by Mr. Justice Stone, held that the employees were employed "in the production of goods for commerce" within the meaning of the act, that a regulation which prohibits the interstate shipment of goods is a regulation of interstate commerce, and that (despite *Hammer v. Dagenhart*, which was expressly overruled) such shipment may be forbidden in order to

⁷300 U. S. 379 (1937).

⁸312 U. S. 100 (1941).

prevent interstate commerce from being "made the instrument of competition in the distribution of goods produced under sub-standard labor conditions, which competition is injurious to the commerce and to the states from and to which the commerce flows." Section 15(a)(1), which prohibits shipment, was therefore held to be an appropriate exercise of the commerce power.

Section 15(a)(2), which requires employers to conform to the wage and hour provisions of the statute, was, as applied to employees who produced for commerce but did not directly engage therein, a regulation, not of commerce itself, but of an activity which substantially affected commerce. This Section, also, was held valid, both as an aid to the enforcement of Section 15(a)(1) and independently of it. The constitutionality of the minimum wage provisions under the fifth amendment, mentioned previously, was said to be established by *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish*, which sustained the validity under the fourteenth amendment of a state minimum wage law.

In the second case, *Opp Cotton Mills v. Administrator*,⁹ the plaintiff sought to have a wage order which fixed a uniform minimum wage of 32 1/2¢ for the textile industry set aside as unconstitutional. In upholding a judgment of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which had affirmed the order, the Supreme Court, again speaking through Mr. Justice Stone, analyzed the sections of the act which provide for the making of such wage orders by the administrator on the advice of an industry committee and held that they did not involve an unconstitutional delegation of legislative power. Contentions that the order of appointment of the particular industry committee was void because the administrator had, after the appointment of the committee, changed his definition of the textile industry, because he had excluded the woolen industry from the textile industry, and also because of his alleged failure in selecting the committee to give "due regard to the geographical regions in which the industry is carried on,"¹⁰ were rejected by the court, as was the contention that the statute required the Committee to hold hearings. The administrator's findings were held conclusive since they were supported by substantial evidence.

Congress had declared in the act that "produced" meant "produced, manufactured, mined, handled, or in any other manner worked on in any State; and that for the purpose of this Act an employee shall be deemed to have been engaged in the production of goods if such employee was employed in producing, manufacturing, mining, handling, transporting, or in any other manner working on such goods, or in any process or occupation necessary to the production thereof, in any State."

⁹ 312 U. S. 126 (1941).

¹⁰ 312 U. S. 135 (1941).

United States v. Darby established the proposition that "production for commerce" included the activities of an employer who produces goods which "according to the normal course of his business" he "intends or expects to move in interstate commerce although, through the exigencies of the businesses all of the goods may not thereafter actually enter interstate commerce." ¹¹

The next cases in which the Supreme Court was faced with a problem of applying the statutory phrase "production of goods for commerce" were *A. B. Kirschbaum Co. v. Walling*,¹² and *Arsenal Building Corp. v. Walling*, which were considered together in an opinion by Mr. Justice Frankfurter, from which Mr. Justice Roberts alone dissented. The administrator had obtained a decree enjoining the owner of a loft building, whose tenants were engaged in the manufacture of clothing for interstate shipment, from violating the wage and hour provisions of the act with respect to employees who were engaged in the maintenance and operation of one of the buildings as engineers, firemen, electricians, elevator operators, watchmen, carpenters, or porters.

In affirming these decrees, Mr. Justice Frankfurter said that the scope of the act was narrower than the constitutional power of Congress, since "the history of the legislation leaves no doubt that Congress chose not to enter areas which it might have occupied." He declared that when Congress has in the past desired to regulate not interstate commerce itself but local activities which affect such commerce, thereby radically readjusting the balance of state and national authority, it has used reasonably explicit language indicative of such purpose. The language which it had employed in the act in question was not broad enough to cover all activities which substantially affected interstate commerce. Nevertheless, "the normal and spontaneous meaning of the language by which Congress defined the class of persons within the benefits of the Act, to wit, employees engaged in producing, manufacturing, mining, handling, transporting, or in any other manner working on such goods, or in any process or occupation necessary to the production thereof, encompasses these employees, in view of their relation to the conceded production of goods for commerce by the tenants But the provisions of the Act expressly make its application dependent upon the character of the employees' activities," not on whether the employer's business — here the ownership and operation of a loft — was itself an industry partaking of interstate commerce. Nor, in view of the statutory phrase "in any process or occupation necessary to the production thereof," was it necessary that the employees participate in the physical process of making the goods. Although "some employees may not be within the Act even though their activities are in an ultimate sense necessary to the production of goods for commerce . . . , the work of the employees . . . had such a close and immediate tie with the process of production for commerce"¹³ as to bring it within the act.

¹¹312 U. S. 118 (1941).

¹²316 U. S. 517 (1942).

¹³316 U. S. 525 (1942).

The *Kirschbaum* decision has had great importance in the administration and subsequent interpretation of the act. Previously, it was fairly arguable that the act applied only to the employees of business enterprises engaged in the production of goods for commerce and that the words "or in any process or occupation necessary to the production thereof" were intended merely to extend the act to the other employees in the same business unit who did clerical or maintenance work and thus did not actually handle or work on the goods. It is true that the Wage and Hour Division had always gone somewhat further and applied the act to a variety of situations in which neither the employees nor their employer were engaged in the production of goods for direct shipment to other states, and that the courts and industry had accepted this interpretation. For example, it has been held that the act covered employees of manufacturers of boxes used by local purchasers to package interstate shipments.¹⁴ But in this case the thing produced by the employees actually moved in commerce, and consequently such employees could be said to be engaged "in the production of goods for commerce" without relying, as was necessary in the *Kirschbaum* case, on the broader phrase "in any process or occupation necessary to the production thereof."

Warren-Bradshaw Co. v. Hall,¹⁵ which was decided in 1942, raised the question as to how far back in the logical chain of causation the words "necessary to the production" extended. Warren-Bradshaw Company owned and operated drilling machinery and contracted with the owners and lessees of oil lands to drill holes for oil wells to an agreed-upon depth short of the oil sand, the drilling being completed by another contractor. The plaintiffs were employed by the company as members of its drilling crew and worked on thirty-two Texas wells. Though their hourly wage was more than that provided for in the Fair Labor Standards Act, they brought suit for the overtime compensation provided for by the act and obtained a judgment which was affirmed by the Circuit Court of Appeals. There was evidence supporting a finding that some of the crude oil produced by the wells found its way into interstate commerce and that more of it did so after it had been refined in a Texas refinery.

The Supreme Court affirmed the decision in an opinion by Mr. Justice Murphy.¹⁶ It said that the drilling was "a necessary part of the productive process to which it is intimately related" and that the employees' activities bore as "close and immediate tie" to production of oil for commerce "as did the services of the building maintenance workers held within the Act in *Kirschbaum Co. v. Walling*." Assuming that the act would not apply to the petitioner in the absence of an expectation or a reasonable basis for an expectation by it that the oil would enter the channels of interstate commerce, "the record contains ample indication that there were reasonable grounds for peti-

¹⁴*Enterprise Box Co. v. Fleming*, 125 F. (2d) 897 (C.C.A. 5th, 1942), cert. denied, 316 U. S. 704 (1942).

¹⁵317 U. S. 88 (1942).

¹⁶317 U. S. 91 (1942).

tioner to anticipate, at the time of drilling, that oil produced by the wells drilled, would move into other states. Petitioner, closely identified as it is with the business of oil production, cannot escape the impact of the Act by a transparent claim of ignorance of the interstate character of the Texas oil industry." Mr. Justice Roberts, dissenting, said that the case presented "a more extravagant application of the statute" than that approved in the *Kirschbaum* case and that the reasoning of the opinion would apply no less to "the labor of the man who made the tools which drilled the well" or to "that of him who mined the iron of which the tools were made."¹⁷

Since further acts by persons unconnected with Warren-Bradshaw Co., were necessary before production could begin, it may be conceded that the case applied the act to activities somewhat less directly connected with interstate commerce than those of the loft employees in the *Kirschbaum* case. But the question seems to be one of degree, and the decision need not mean that the worker who mined the ore to make the tools would be within the act merely because the tools were used to drill for hoped-for oil, which, if obtained, would move in interstate channels; nor need it mean even that the employees who manufactured the drilling rig would be engaged in a "process or occupation necessary to the production" of the oil. The employees in both the *Kirschbaum* and *Warren-Bradshaw* cases were at least one step removed from production, but in at least two respects they were more closely related to the actual production than the employees of the ordinary suppliers of goods or services: first, they worked on the site of production; and, second, the enterprises in which they were engaged were not serving all kinds of local customers but were specifically directed toward facilitating the production of goods for commerce.

In *Higgins v. Carr Bros. Co.*,¹⁸ which was decided in 1943, a state court in Maine had found that the employer bought fruit and produce, partly from interstate sources, and sold it at wholesale to local retailers, first taking title to the merchandise and making his own deliveries. The Supreme Court affirmed the judgment of the Supreme Court of Maine which denied the employee recovery in wages. He had brought action for minimum wages and overtime pay. The Maine Courts had held that when the merchandise coming from without the state was unloaded at the respondent's place of business, its "interstate movement" had ended. This case neither adds nor detracts from definitions of interstate commerce, but merely reaffirms the position of the court taken in the *Schechter Poultry Corporation Case* in 1935 which invalidated the N. R. A.

In the *Roland Electrical Co. v. Walling* case,¹⁹ the Supreme Court affirmed the ruling of the Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit that

¹⁷ 317 U. S. 92-94 (1942).

¹⁸ 317 U. S. 572 (1943).

¹⁹ 326 U. S. 657 (1946).

the employees of a corporation whose business is industrial wiring and supplying electrical motors to factories engaged in the production of goods for commerce are covered by the wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. This case and others decided between 1943 and the present add little to the definitions of interstate commerce already cited.

One further case decided in 1947 gives a slightly different twist by handing the ultimate decision back to a state court. In *Mabee v. White Plains Publishing Co.*,²⁰ the Supreme Court reversed a state decision that a newspaper, 99 1/2% of the circulation of which was intrastate, was not engaged in the production of goods for commerce. The court's opinion left open to the state the question whether the particular employees who were suing for minimum wages and overtime were covered by the act.

Conclusions

The original meaning of interstate commerce is subject to conjecture, though general belief has it that the framers of the Constitution had in mind merely the exchange of goods through *purchase and sale*. Present day authorities seem to agree that this failure to spell out a comprehensive definition was a wise omission. No constitutional amendments have been necessary to legalize the amplified definition in vogue today. Congress and the courts, particularly the latter, have taken care of that.

John Marshall in the famed "Steamboat" case of 1824 gave the first real definition when he said, "Commerce, undoubtedly, is traffic, but it is something more, it is intercourse." Thus commerce became *transportation and communication*. This laid open to federal regulation all types of transportation and communication crossing state lines.

It was not until 1941 that the celebrated Darby case provided a newly constituted court the opportunity to say that the *production* of goods affecting interstate commerce comes under the "commerce" clause. Until this decision, Congress and labor had been fighting a losing battle to put a floor under wages. This case upheld the constitutionality of the Fair Standards Act (previously cited) and brought on further amplification of the definition of federal authority over commerce.

The Kirschbaum case (1942), referring to the same Act, enabled the Court to decide that occupations *necessary to production* of goods for Commerce come under federal regulation. Subsequent minimum wage decisions and others, taking their cue from the "necessary to production" principle, have left Congress empowered to regulate Commerce and employment, limited only by the necessary and proper clause.

²⁰ 327 U. S. 178 (1947).

Imagery in Graham Greene's Trilogy

by

Robert L. Gale

Given the large number of recent articles on imagery in fictional works, it is perhaps surprising that the figures of Graham Greene have so long escaped scrutiny, though to be sure several critics have glanced with admiration or disfavor at their unusual qualities. Some critics have lauded their illuminating, original, and unexpected content;¹ others have called them mannered and have been pleased recently to note Greene's supposed abandonment of certain startling images.²

At least three of Greene's varied works are related not only thematically but also imagistically. They are *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), which according to Neville Braybrooke "are Greene's three major achievements: his other books, by comparison, are mere stepping-stones."³ The editors of *Life* call the three works a "trilogy . . . woven around the central theme of personal salvation (and damnation)."⁴ Greene himself has linked the parts of this "Commedia" by saying, "I wrote a book about a man who goes to hell -- *Brighton Rock* -- another about a man who goes to heaven -- *The Power and the Glory*. Now I've . . . written one [*The Heart of the Matter*] about a man who goes to purgatory."⁵ Linking the three novels also are great numbers of images which functionally and categorically are very similar throughout.

It is difficult and academically even dangerous to search more than superficially into an author's life and the nature of his reading for sources of

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¹William Plomer, [Review of Graham Greene, *England Made Me*] *Spectator*, CLIV (June 23, 1935), 1116; Cora Carter, [Review of Greene, *England Made Me*] *New York Herald Tribune Books*, September 22, 1935, p. 15; Jane Spence Southron, [Review of Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock*] *New York Times Book Review*, January 26, 1938, p. 6.

²Harry Sylvester, "Graham Greene . . .," *Commonweal*, XXXIII (October 25, 1940), 12; David Durnham, [Review of Graham Greene, *Nineteen Stories*] *Commonweal*, IL (March 11, 1949), LIV (July 6, 1951), 312.

³Neville Braybrooke, "Graham Greene: A Pioneer Novelist," *English Journal*, XXXIX (October, 1950), 418.

⁴"The Catholic Church's New Dogma: The Assumption of Mary," *Life*, XXIX (October 30, 1950), 51.

⁵Quoted in "Shocker," *Time*, LVIII (October 29, 1951), 103.

his varied figures. Nevertheless, it may be pertinent to point out certain salient features of Greene's background. His father was headmaster of a school where as a pupil for several years the future novelist was often unhappy, sometimes terrified, and possibly even threatened -- by a sadistic schoolmate with a pair of dividers.⁶ When but twelve or so, Greene made several presumably serious attempts at suicide; he tells us that when eighteen he played Russian roulette until it bored him.⁷ His literary awareness began with an excited reading of Marjorie Bowen's *Viper of Milan* and quickly progressed to and through such better writers as Fielding, Sterne, Dickens, James, and Hemingway. Between his engagement and his marriage to a Catholic, Greene became in 1926 a convert. He has traveled extensively, through most of the civilized and not so civilized world. Before becoming known as a serious novelist, he was associated with several newspapers, with one as film editor; he still devotes considerable creative energy to movie scenarios. These few biographical facts may throw some light upon certain of Greene's figures of speech, those for example which involve lonely or bullying school children; violence, sickness, and decay; war, and the sense of remoteness; and religion.

Many of Greene's short, crisp images are present seemingly only to show that their inventor, like F. Scott Fitzgerald, hopes never to be thought dull. Other figures, however, are more functional -- those for example which reveal character, explain (and sometimes predict) action, and establish underlying patterns connecting whole sections of a work. Incidentally, a few similes and metaphors have an elaborate flourish reminiscent of many in the later James; they serve to add color and resonance to the novels.

Brighton Rock has numerous instances of the brief, odd simile which closes off the sentence, after the main thought, with a surprising twist: "Dallow came lugging the suitcase down the passage; the cord of Spicer's pyjamas squeezed out of it like toothpaste." "Outside the Norfolk bar two smart scarlet racing models lay along the kerb like twin beds." *The Power and the Glory* and especially *The Heart of the Matter* have far fewer of these inessential, decorative figures.

More significant are the occasional metaphors and the many similes inserted to delineate character and advance plot. For example, Greene thus describes the disarming gestures of Pinkie, hero-villain of *Brighton Rock*, toward the crony whose death he has secretly planned: "Like a cruel child who hides the dividers behind him, he put his hand with spurious affection on

⁶ "What Price Pity?", *Time*, LII (August 9, 1948), 85; "Shocker," op. cit., p. 99; Kenneth A. Lohf, "Graham Greene and the Problem of Evil," *Catholic World*, CLXXIII (June, 1951), 197.

⁷ Graham Greene, "The Revolver in the Corner Cupboard," *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays* (New York, 1952), pp. 175-176.

Spicer's arm." And while Scobie, hero-victim of *The Heart of the Matter*, is visiting Yusef, he hears the cry of Ali, Scobie's servant: "it swam up like a drowning animal for air, and fell again into the darkness of the room, into the whisky, under the desk, into the basket of wastepaper, a discarded finished cry." This image actually predicts the nature of Scobie's agonized discovery outside, that Yusef, probably only trying to aid his white friend, has had Ali murdered: a moment later we read that "the seal grey neck [another water and animal reference] had been slashed and slashed again." *Brighton Rock* and *The Power and the Glory* also contain several passages in which figures are prophetic of action to come. For example, midway in the narrative concerning him, Pinkie feels suddenly secure and his memory sheds all unpleasantness: "Hale [his recently murdered victim] dropped out of sight, like a stone thrown over a cliff." In the end, Pinkie meets his death by flinging himself over a literal cliff. And when the unnamed Mexican priest in *The Power and the Glory* furtively says Mass against the law, "he raised the Host . . . [and] could imagine the faces lifted like famished dogs." A few pages later, this said, repentant padre is trying to effect an understanding with his strange daughter and "moved toward her with infinite caution, as if she were an animal who distrusted him." Later he finds himself face to face literally with a dog which mistrusts him: the starving man hopes to rob it of a gnawed bone.

More than three dozen poison, pain, and filth images form a pattern in *Brighton Rock* as pervasive as a similar motif in *Hamlet*. Young Pinkie contains poison and trails it almost monotonously through the entire book. "There was poison in his veins, though he grinned and bore it." "The poison twisted in the Boy's veins." Even when he observes the water beyond the Brighton pier, it is to him a "dark poison-bottle green." Suspecting his wife Rose of subterfuge, he "laughed again; the horror of the world lay like infection in his throat." And as Rose confesses to Pinkie on their wedding night that she too is bad -- so she thinks -- he "felt desire move again, like nausea in the belly." In fact, throughout, Pinkie's reluctant lust⁸ is imagined as painful, sickening, filthy. "He watched her with his soured virginity, as one might watch a draught of medicine offered that one would never, never take. . ." There are other such noxious figures, but with the following we have perhaps sounded sufficient depths: "To marry -- it was like ordure on the hands."

The Heart of the Matter has its imagistic patterns too. An interesting one, in the light of both author of hero, is comprised of the many similes involving children -- in the nursery, playing games, at school, and elsewhere. After Scobie's death, his mistress urgently wants to believe in God: "the wish struggled in her body like a child. . ." Though Scobie has evidently at

⁸His [Pinkie's] resentment against sex is, in fact, itself based on sexual craving, and only in sexual terms can it be defined" -- Derek Traversi, "Graham Greene: 1. The Earlier Novels," *Twentieth Century*, CXLIX (March, 1951), 239.

last impregnated the young woman with a sense of religion, earlier their union produced only worried cunning: "they lifted discretion between them like a cradle." A similar juxtaposition of innocence and its opposite occurs when the secret agent, on a hotel balcony, hears the sing-song of the pandering native lads: "The boys' refrain came faintly up to Wilson like a nursery rhyme..." The initial childlike nature of Scobie's mistress is depicted by many child images. Even when she achieves her poise and clutches her advantage over the married Scobie, we read that "She was like a child with a pair of dividers who knows her power to injure." Other school experiences provide material for additional figures. When Scobie catches the Portuguese captain, the smuggler weeps, "like a child -- an unattractive child, the fat boy of the school." Scobie takes pity and burns the evidence; though a subordinate enters and idly watches him, "There was nothing to be read in the vacuous face, blank as a school noticeboard out of term." Later, the suicide note of Dicky, another aide, strikes Scobie as "like a letter from school excusing a bad report." And when Wilson, the agent, surreptitiously consults his code-books in the office he uses as a blind, he is "like a schoolboy using a crib..." Seemingly dominated often by thoughts of his own childhood, Graham Greene naturally pictures his less mature characters by recourse to similes involving children. The device is particularly effective when Scobie's thoughts are involved, because Scobie fatally pities the whole world.

Three other imagistic patterns remain for brief discussion: they are war, travel, and religion. Of the numerous war figures in the three novels, those from *Brighton Rock* are generally almost too clever, the few from *The Power and the Glory* are often short and pertain to the sea, and those from *The Heart of the Matter* are serious and somewhat more involved. Ida Arnold, Pinkie's blowsy, furious pursuer, regards the streets of Brighton as "her battlefield"; later she sails into the restaurant where Rose works "like a warship going into action, a warship on the right side in a war to end wars, the signal flags proclaiming that every man would do his duty." Later, leading law and order, Ida closes in: "she was like the chariot in a triumph -- behind her were all the big battalions." Even meek little Rose is militant when challenged: "The bony and determined face stared...; all the fight there was in the world lay there -- warships cleared for action and bombing fleets took flight -- between the set eyes and the stubborn mouth. It was like the map of a campaign marked with flags." An even more grotesque figure, and a rare Freudian one in the bargain, reveals Pinkie's plight as he is seeking sexual experience with the now dead Spicer's girl: "He knew the traditional actions as a man may know the principles of gunnery in chalk on a blackboard, but to translate the knowledge to action, to the smashed village and the ravaged woman, one needed help from the nerves."

The most gripping travel images in Greene, himself a traveler of vast experience, are those late in *The Heart of the Matter* which poignantly suggest Scobie's awareness that his adulterous affair is destroying his old familiar terrain and is removing him to a remote land. Listed in isolation, these

figures might become an almost monotonous sermon on the loneliness of the sinner; but in context they are most effective. Fidelity to his mistress starts Scobie "on a longer journey than he had ever intended." He is afraid to look back on the "ravaged countryside" of his past. Next, news of his wife's impending return makes "ordinary life" take on "the unreality of a country one is leaving for ever." Soon he is entering "the territory of lies without a passport for return." He envies apparently guiltless communicants at church as persons of "a country to which he would never return."⁹

Finally, a not especially frequent but nonetheless excellent sort of image is that in which religious aspects appear. Often odd juxtaposition creates an arresting effect. In the shooting gallery, for example, "shelves of dolls stared down [at Pinkie] with glassy innocence, like virgins in a church repository." Rose's original innocence suggests a similar image to her would-be corruptor. "She looked like one of the small gaudy statues in an ugly church: a paper crown wouldn't have looked odd on her or a painted heart; you could pray to her but you couldn't expect an answer." Pinkie relishes his acquired control over the poor girl. "She was good, but he'd got her like you got God in the Eucharist -- in the guts. God couldn't escape the evil mouth which chose to eat its own damnation." Religious figures in *The Power and the Glory* are rather numerous but are not often more than conventional. Thus, the *mestizo* who contemplates betraying the priest is thrice compared to Judas. Native huts, a canopied hotel bed, and even a peasant's strong teeth are compared to tombs. A precise, cold German sleeps undisturbed "with the thin rectitude of a bishop upon a tomb." And we read of guardian spirits, soldiers of Christ, choirs of angels, and apocalyptic visions, among other images. Similarly, *The Heart of the Matter* is conventional in its few religious figures. However, as a concluding aside, it may be mentioned that suicide makes Scobie -- and perhaps Greene -- think of Christ.¹⁰ At a dinner party given by a friend, poor Scobie is aghast at the unemotional discussion of suicide, a topic which punctuates this novel and many others by Greene and which here reminds Scobie of his subordinate's recent suicide. He "remembered the letter signed 'Dicky': the immature handwriting: the marks of cigarettes on the chairs. the novels of Wallace: the stigmata of loneliness. Through two thousand years, he thought, we have discussed Christ's agony in just this disinterested way." A few pages earlier, Scobie's sandy thoughts include this one: "Christ had not been murdered: you couldn't murder God: Christ had killed himself: he had hung himself on the Cross as surely as [Dicky] Pemberton from the picture-rail."

⁹ The priest in *The Power and the Glory* avoiding the town of Carmen for fear of reprisals, experiences a similar sense of isolation: "He felt like a man without a passport who is turned away from every harbour." And Ida in *Brighton Rock* senses that Pinkie and Rose are remote from her because of their sin: "It was as if she were in a strange country: the typical Englishwoman abroad. She hadn't even got a phrase book."

¹⁰ Reviewing *The Heart of the Matter*, Henry Morton Robinson remarks most astutely, "...it may be going too far to suggest--though the idea keeps recurring to me--that Major Scobie is, in his obscure station, an all-suffering alter Christus"--*Saturday Review of Literature*, XXXI (July 10, 1948), 4.

Thus it may be seen that Graham Greene, whose ability to construct turbulent plots and to analyze personalities frequently abnormal and usually under intense strain has been recognized by many critics, uses as one element of an exciting style metaphors and similes deriving from many sources. It is noteworthy that Greene's imagery rarely stems from any branch of art, craftsmanship, or sports, or from animal or floral life. But his figures from childhood, disease and violence, combat and the faraway, and religion manifestly enrich a splendid rhetoric and support a varied content.

Moby-Dick

by

Robert Holland

In 1900, Barrett Wendell, in his *Literary History of America*, had only this to say of the author of *Moby-Dick*: "Herman Melville, with his books about the South Seas, which Robert Louis Stevenson is said to have declared the best ever written, and with his novels of maritime adventure, began a career of literary promise, which never came to fruition." In the same book he devoted 12 pages to Charles Brockden Brown, 12 to Irving, 15 to Longfellow, 14 to Lowell, and so on. In 1920, Herman Weaver gave impetus to a study of Melville which increases to the present time. Melville is now universally rated as one of the three or four greatest American men of letters. *Billy Budd*, his last novel, is currently being revived in drama and opera with some success among the populace. Somerset Maugham has listed *Moby-Dick* as one of the world's ten greatest novels.

There is an explanation of the 19th Century neglect of Melville. From the Civil War to the First World War, the questioning spirit did not fare well in the American climate. Denial and doubt were not so welcome as affirmation. Whitman, the affirmer, for instance, was always a more popular figure than Melville, in spite of the fact that Whitman was a poet and Melville a novelist and that all things being equal the judgment should have been reversed. Realism and naturalism, objective and fearless search for truth in art, did not triumph in this country until 1900, and indeed not until some years after. In spite of pioneer truth tellers like Jack London, Mark Twain, Frank Norris, and Stephen Crane, Mencken at the time of the first World War could still fulminate against the spirit of censorship and romance which was smothering American letters. At about the same time Van Wyck Brooks wrote two books attempting to show that America had driven from its shores one great artist, Henry James, and stifled the genius of another, Mark Twain. Ellen Glasgow in the 90's could set herself the task of breaking through the obscurantist wall of Southern genteel romanticism and be called to task by an intelligent reader with words to this effect: "But, Ellen, in your new book you speak of this girl's knowing someone was a bastard; now, no respectable Southern girl knows what a bastard is." The temper of the main drift of American literature was optimistic and delusive, in other words. William Dean Howells, himself a good novelist and a self-styled realist, could remind his public in the 90's that the true novel must not treat of the sordid or the sceptical but of the smiling aspects of life, which are, he said, after all typically American.

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Herman Melville would not have shared this view. He was a truth-teller with a tragic view of life. His early reputation as a writer of adventure stories of the South Seas such as *Typee* and *Omoo* (1846 and 1847) suffered a devastating blow with the publication of *Mardi* (1849), a difficult and pessimistic allegory of a futile search for the ideal, and of *Moby-Dick* (1851), which while beginning as a fine story of whaling "deplorably" dropped off into philosophical speculation and into serious allegory of man face to face with his universe. For the optimism which I earlier mentioned, the optimism which from the Civil War on stifled Melville's reputation and ignored his books, was an extension of the optimistic romanticism of Melville's own time. Melville grew to manhood in the high tide of romanticism in America, in the age of Emerson the pantheist, to whom all the world was good, and evil non-existent; and he took direct issue with that Emersonian mildness.

This nation inherited two opposing philosophies of life. First is the Puritan: with its emphasis on sin and evil, on suffering and soul-searching and the devil's reality, on man's helplessness in a hostile or punitive universe. That attitude, which might be called the Dark View, has cropped up in our own time, as in Dreiser, T. S. Eliot, and Faulkner. It also lived a hundred years ago in Hawthorne and Melville. The opposing philosophical view was 18th century optimism, and belief in progress and the natural goodness of man, which made such men as Franklin and Jefferson. That attitude pretty much prevails in Emerson and Thoreau, and it continues in Howells and into all the affirmative writers of the present time. It is not, of course, so cut and dried as I have stated it. But I think in the main that the American character has been determined largely by these two philosophical backgrounds: by Newton and Franklin on the one hand, and by Calvin and Jonathan Edwards on the other.

Emerson took the light view; his transcendental group were the cosmic criers of Peace It's Wonderful. Across town and down the peninsula two other writers were at the same time seeing life in a different way. These two Dark Viewers were Hawthorne and Melville, both concerned with the black depths of man's being rather than with the bright surface. While at work on *Moby Dick* in 1850, Melville expressed his own nature when he wrote admiringly of Hawthorne that he had a "profound heart," that he knew "suffering," and "melancholy," that he had a "great, deep intellect which drops down into the universe like a plummet." Continuing, he said, "For spite of all the Indian-summer sunlight on the hither side of Hawthorne's soul, the other side — like the dark half of the physical sphere — is shrouded in a blackness, ten times black.... this great power of blackness in him derives its force from its appeals to that Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations... no deeply thinking man is always and wholly free."

The novel *Moby-Dick*, published in 1851, the year of Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, was the high point of Melville's genius, after which, relatively neglected, depressed at the reception which America gave to his best work,

he spent thirty years making a living in other ways, nineteen of them as a customs inspector in New York, a lost figure in American letters.

I will not take time or burden your interest with citing representative judgments on *Moby-Dick*. It is enough to say that it has all the marks of a great book in this: that the interpretations are legion and that its interest is perpetually fresh and a constant challenge to the critic. It is in this sense like *Hamlet*, which nobody knows the meaning of because it has so many meanings.

It is impossible to cover within the range of this paper the variety of themes in *Moby-Dick*. I would like to discuss the novel primarily as the treatment of one great figure, Captain Ahab, named after the evillest of all the Kings of Judea; I will discuss Ahab as a composite rebel, summing up in himself the essential characteristics of three other great literary rebels, Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (1588-92), Milton's *Satan* (1667), and the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus (5th Century, B. C.). As a foil to Ahab is Starbuck the first mate of the *Pequod* and he will come in for some share of attention; and, of course, the White Whale himself will range throughout the discussion as he does throughout the book. After the discussion of this threefold Ahab, I will try to show why Ahab is as he is, what philosophical motivation impels him. I will conclude with a few remarks upon structure and style. The book is much more than this, a fine treatment, for instance, of whaling; it reaches into scores of little inlets and lagoons of action and thought besides the ones I have mentioned; it is a sprawling book, conceived on the grand plan of *War and Peace*, executed with all brilliance of a great and ranging mind; structurally held together by the interlocking chapters of action and of pondering and by the sure drive to tragedy inherent in Ahab's insatiable appetite for revenge against a brute which has maimed him.

Ahab as Dr. Faustus

In the novel *Pierre*, which Melville published in 1852, there is a tatterdemalion philosopher Plotinus Plinlimmon, from whose baggy and scholarly pocket a dog-eared manuscript protrudes. This is Plinlimmon's great philosophical work, the *chef d'oeuvre* of this down-at-heeler; it is titled "Horologicals and Chronometricals." There are, says Plinlimmon, two standards of time by which man must live. First is horological Time, or true Greenwich, changeless and absolute; being ideal, it is the time by which man steers in the highest reaches of his being, the pole star and guide; second is chronological time, which is local and adjustable; it is the time of earthly day-by-day man, man tuned to his immediate environment. Wisdom and happiness lie in steering the middle course between these two standards (summed up as a popular saying: keep your feet on the ground and your eyes on the stars). The tragedy of *Pierre* is the result of his following the ideal without reference to local conditions, to human frailty, to custom, and to man's inevitable ultimate ignorance. Ahab is like *Pierre*; he blinds himself to the human condition and

sets his mind on a rending of nature to find the proscribed secrets of God. Against the cosmic inviolability of *Moby-Dick*, against the unfathomable secret of universal power, he goes to his doom, disregarding the warnings of time and place and fellow man. Like Marlowe's Faustus, who signs a pact with hell in return for power and knowledge, he seeks the impossible — equality with God. Ahab even indulges in a ritual similar to that in which Faustus signs his soul away in blood; for before the sighting of *Moby-Dick*, he tempers his harpoon in the blood of three harpooners aboard the *Pequod*. Unlike Faustus, he does not at the end attempt repentance, but in the face of annihilation and doom he defies the great whale deliberately and with a full knowledge of the probable result.

Towards thee I roll, thou all-destroying but unconquer-
ing whale; to the last I grapple with thee; from hell's
heart I stab at thee; for hate's sake I spit my last
breath at thee.

In one sense then *Moby-Dick* is the story of man's overweening desire for knowledge and power and the penalty for it. With Adam this desire led to death, with Faustus to death, and with Ahab to death. Through appearance to get at truth and to share omniscience with the Creator; to dive beneath the surface of the senses to the awful center of creation; "to have one's hands," as Melville says, "among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world," such was Ahab's dream, as it was the dream of Faustus. For Faustus, too, dreams of unlimited power and knowledge, as when he soliloquizes:

All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command. Emperors and kings
Are but obey'd in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man.
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity.

Ahab represents such an intellectual seeker, the rebel against intellectual thralldom. As a modern Dr. Faustus he is the highest growth of Renaissance man, taking infinity as his province. To him, as to Faustus, the long tradition of Christian subservience and humility were as nothing to the desire to become God-man, that impossible dream of the ambitious mind. For truth to Ahab lay deep beneath appearances:

All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks.
But in each event- in the living act, the undoubted
deed- there, some unknown but still reasoning thing
puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind

the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it.... Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me.

Like afflicted Job, Ahab rises in anger not against his affliction, but against the inexplicability of the Supreme Power. Like Job, he would know, would understand, would reason with God:

Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress...? Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.... Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.... I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction. For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion.... Thou renewest thy witnesses against me.... changes and wars are against me.. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?... Are not my days few? cease then and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little.... Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

Like Job for a time, like Faustus- egocentric and passionate, yet with an understandable passion to understand the ways of God, Ahab falls into the unforgivable sin of the Greeks — HUBRIS — pride.

Ahab As Satan

With a few exceptions, not since the Greeks and Romans, who were playmates of Divinity, has Western man assaulted the Creation and sought revenge against the Gods themselves. One of the exceptions is Lord Byron's Cain, who dared with Lucifer to tell the Omnipotent Tyrant that He is not good. Greater than Cain is Milton's Satan, who, cast out of Heaven, vows revenge on his conqueror. Out of his outraged and subtle mind evolves the plot to corrupt God's finest creature, a revenge truly telling. Such a revenger is Ahab. As he desired Faustian knowledge, so did he seek Satanic revenge. Take away the theological symbol God and you have the White Whale, whose dismemberment of Ahab takes on the cosmic aspect encountered in Satan's fall. *Moby-Dick* is the story of a gigantic attempt at revenge against the brute power of the universe. Maddened by his mutilation, Ahab loses sight of his necessarily inferior status and rises in wrath against the symbol of infinity.

The White Whale swam before him as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some men feel eating in them. . . . That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half the world All that most maddens and torments; all that cracks and sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought; all evil, to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby-Dick. He piled upon the whale's white hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it. . . . He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge.

Like Satan, Ahab achieves his revenge (or pursues it) with the inevitable consequence that in the wake of his action the innocent suffer the fate of the guilty. Satan triumphed by corrupting mankind. Ahab's fantastic plot involves the same sort of corruption. Ishmael alone escapes to tell the story. Sinking with the *Pequod* to the "pelvis of the world" the ship's crew are the harvest of Ahab's madness. In the final scene of the book, as the ship settles before the battering of the White Whale, the hand of the lookout at mast-top nails to the mast a pennon.

A sky-hawk that tauntingly had followed the main-truck downwards from its natural home among the stars, pecking at the flag, and incommoding Tashtego there; this bird now chanced to intercept its broad fluttering wing between the hammer and the wood; and simultaneously feeling that ethereal thrill, the submerged savage beneath, in his death-grasp, kept his hammer frozen there; and so the bird of heaven, with archangelic shrieks, and his imperial beak thrust upwards, and his whole captive form folded in the flag of Ahab, went down with his ship, which, like Satan, would not sink to hell till she had dragged a living part of heaven along with her, and helmeted herself with it.

In this story of revenge, the foil of Ahab is the prudent and cautious first mate, Starbuck. It is Starbuck who, though partially under Ahab's spell, alone pleads with him to forsake his revenge, who speaks of land (a symbol throughout the book opposed to the wild and treacherous sea), who speaks of family and flowery meadows; who is symbolic of tolerance, rationality, and compromise. Starbuck bears a resemblance to Belial, one of Satan's lieutenants in Milton's Council in Hell, who to the cries for war against the Omnipotent advises:

This in now
 Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
 Our supream Foe in time may much remit
 His anger, and perhaps thus farr removed
 Not mind us for offending, satisfied
 With what is punished; whence these raging fires
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames....
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light....
 Thus Belial with words cloathed in reasons garb
 Counseled ignoble ease, and peaceful sloath....

Thus Starbuck, Belial-Plinlimmon, counsels Ahab. But to his appeals Ahab, though intellectually sympathetic, is obdurate. For Ahab feels as does Satan, who answers Belial and his other counsellors:

But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
 And this imperial Sovranty, adorned
 With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
 Of difficulty or danger could deter
 Me for attempting. ... intermit to watch
 Against a wakeful Foe, while I abroad
 Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
 Deliverance for us all....

Ahab As Prometheus

If he is Faustus the insatiable seeker and Satan the revenger, Ahab is also Prometheus, the defiant and the courageous. You remember the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, in which Prometheus, for bringing fire to man, is doomed by Zeus to be eternally chained to a mountain rock and preyed upon by vultures. He is our greatest classic symbol of defiance against a superior and arbitrary force, of voluntary suffering for the cause of the unconquerable mind of man. Ahab is Melville's Prometheus. There seems even to be a conscious similarity of symbols between the vultures who eat at the vitals of Prometheus and the hawk which circles and torments Ahab as he gazes from the masthead in search of Moby-Dick, such a hawk as in the symbolic close of the novel is driven against the mast by the hammer of Tashtego.

Ahab never wavers in his defiance. To the fury of a storm at sea he cries:

I knowthee now, thou clear spirit, and I now know that
 thy right worship is defiance. To neither love nor
 reverence wilt thou be kind....No fearless fool now
 fronts thee. I own thy speechless, placeless power;
 but to the last gasp of my earthquake life will dispute
 its unconditional, unintegral mastery in me. In the

midst of the personified impersonal, a personality stands here. Though but a point at best; whence-soe'er I came; where-soe'er I go; yet while I earthly live, the queenly personality lives in me, and feels her royal rights. . . . Come in thy lowest form of love, and I will kneel and kiss thee; but at thy highest, come as mere supernal power; and though thou launchest navies of full-freighted worlds, there's that in here that still remains indifferent. Oh, thou clear spirit, of thy fire thou madest me, and like a true child of fire, I breathe it back to thee.

The Promethean defiance and fortitude of Ahab takes two forms — first, a positive defiance against the crushing and mysterious power of the symbolic White Whale; and second, a resistance to the perpetual appeal of surrender and retreat. The latter course, this desire to retreat, adds its appeal to Ahab's own nostalgia for home and family and to the ceaseless appeals of Starbuck, himself no Prometheus but normal man loving wife and child and willing to leave to God the things that are God's. In the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, Oceanus on a winged horse appears before the defiant Prometheus and counsels him to submit and to think of himself. Prometheus refuses. So Ahab. The refusal is at times no easy thing. Just before the climax of the novel, for instance, Ahab speaks to Starbuck, in that strange sympathy which now and then manifests itself between enemies — speaks of the lure of the happy, unquestioning life. And again, on a beautiful day at sea Ahab almost yields to the siren call of rest, to the lotus land of honeyed forgetfulness and acceptance. Like Tennyson's mariners he hears the music of surrender.

... the lovely aromas in that enchanted air did at last seem to dispel, for a moment, the cankerous thing in his soul. That glad, happy air, that winsome sky, did at last stroke and caress him; the step-mother world, so long cruel — forbidding — now threw affectionate arms round his stubborn neck, and did seem to joyously sob over him, as if over one, that however wilful and erring, she could yet find it in her heart to save and to bless.

Continually through the voyage such temptations seek to ensnare him, to bring him back to normal humanness into the mid-path orbit of his kind. But as the temptation grows, so grows his resistance, and he cuts adrift from all dependence on humankind — at one time dashing his quadrant to the quarter deck, to sail his course from then on by dead reckoning, as if to heap up his pain in masochistic defiance. In the heat of the chase, again, as the *Pequod* nears the vicinity of Moby-Dick, he renounces human sympathy, refusing to allow his ship to join in a search for the lost whaleboat of a sister ship. Defying Fate, he grows more egocentric, overshooting the mark as if a concession were the whole of surrender.

This then as I see it is Ahab, supreme rebel, Faustus, Satan, Prometheus, man in his uttermost pride and self-expression. Evil, yes, but noble. In his form and face appear the ravages of his terrible courage and determination. Observe how he looks to the crew on his first appearance on the quarter deck, as the ship sails South to its doom.

He looked like a man cut away from the stake, when the fire has overrunningly wasted all the limbs without consuming them, or taking away one particle from their compacted aged robustness. His whole high, broad forehead seemed made of solid bronze, and shaped in an unalterable mould, like Cellini's cast Perseus. Threading its way out from among his gray hairs, and continuing right down one side of his tawny scorched face and neck...you saw a slender rod-like mark, lividly whitish. It resembled that perpendicular seam sometimes made in the straight, lofty trunk of a great tree, when the upper lightning tearingly darts down it, and without wrenching a single twig, peels and grooves out the bark from top to bottom, ere running off into the soil, leaving the tree still greenly alive, but branded.

What, you may ask, lies, philosophically, at the center of Ahab's rebellion and madness. What in life and nature creates in him the demonistic monomania which foredooms him? It is, I think, a passion to solve the essential paradox which has troubled man from his first attainment to philosophical thought: the coexistence of good and evil, the reconciliation of evil with the concept of a good God, and the dualism in man and nature. In a great passage on the White Whale, observe how this death in life, this evil in good, this paradox and dualism reside:

It was a clear steel-blue day....Hither, and thither, on high, glided the snow white wings of small, unspeckled birds; these were the gentle thoughts of the feminine air; but to and fro in the deeps, far down in the bottomless blue, rushed mighty Leviathans, sword-fish, and sharks; and these were the strong, troubled, murderous thinkings of the masculine sea.

And into this day glides Moby-Dick:

A gentle joyousness- a mighty mildness of repose in swiftness, invested the gliding whale. Not the white bull Jupiter swimming away with ravishing Europa clinging to his graceful horns; his lovely, leering eyes sideways intent upon the maid; with smooth bewitching

fleetness, rippling straight for the nuptial bower in Crete; not Jove, not that great majesty Supreme! did surpass the glorified White Whale as he so divinely swam..... On each soft side... the whale shed off enticings.... And thus, through the serene tranquillities of the tropical sea... Moby-Dick moved on, still withholding from sight the full terrors of his submerged trunk, entirely hiding the wrenched hideousness of his jaw....

In the very whiteness of the whale himself is a strange and terrible dualism. For "in many natural objects," says Melville, "whiteness enhances beauty...." It has signified gladness, as with the Romans, to whom a white stone "marked a joyful day"; it has symbolized "the innocence of brides, the benignity of age"; it has typified in some places "the majesty of Justice in the ermine of the judge" and "Great Jove himself" was made incarnate "in a snow-white bull." But note the other side. "There yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood." "Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are?" And white is "the one visible aspect of the dead which most appals the gazer"- it is "the expressive hue of the shroud." White is, in a great phrase, "the all-color of atheism." Thus, though in many of its aspects "this visible world seems formed in love, the invisible spheres were formed in fright." And of all these horrors "the Albino Whale was the symbol. Wonder ye then at the fiery hunt?"

The great dichotomies, these great questions of fate and free will, the mystery of the nature of God — are what moved Ahab, as they have always moved man. Man is ignorantly indifferent, or he accepts on authority, or he strives to find his own answers. *Moby-Dick* is the story of Man's assault on the Supreme Power, of whom the Whale is the symbol; Ahab is the foredoomed agent of the assault — an admirable yet pitiful creature. Pitiful because foredoomed. Admirable because unyielding.

For to Ahab, the way of acceptance is ignominious. Ahab is mankind, or at least the rebellious segment of it. For in man too is a dualism, the Janus face, symbolized in the novel as sea and land:

But not only is the sea such a foe to man who is an alien to it, but it is also a fiend to its own offspring.... Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks.... Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water..... treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure.... Consider, once more, the universal

cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began... Consider all this; and then turn to the green, gentle and most docile earth; consider them both... and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appealing ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst not return!

Ahab pushed off; he attempted to find a certainty. In this life there is none, says Melville. In the chapter "The Mat-Maker" Queequeg and Ishmael are at work weaving mat — and Ishmael ponders:

[This mat is] the Loom of Time, and I myself... a shuttle mechanically weaving and weaving away at the Fates. There lay the fixed threads of the warp subject to but one single, ever returning, unchanging vibration.... This warp seemed necessity; and here, thought I, with my own hand I ply my own shuttle and weave my own destiny into these unalterable threads. [This is free will.] Meantime, Queequeg's impulsive, indifferent sword, sometimes hitting the woof slantingly, or crookedly, or strongly, or weakly.... this savage's sword, thought I, which thus finally shapes and fashions both warp and woof; this easy, indifferent sword must be chance — aye, chance, free will, and necessity... all interweavingly working together.

One understands Faustus, Satan, Prometheus, Ahab. They represent man's aspiration to stand on a level with the things he can contemplate. And understanding, one can sympathize. Yet all, in their more or less degree, are evil, as all excess is evil. And in them we find excess. Faustus lacked humility, Satan lacked obedience, Prometheus lacked discipline — Ahab lacked all three. Melville's last hero, Billy Budd, had them all — and, added to them, love. Melville's last word to us is a softer word than any which may sum up Ahab.

A little about style and structure in the novel. Writing to Hawthorne in 1851, several months before *Moby-Dick* was published, Melville said of his own work: "What I feel most moved to write, that is banned — it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the *other* way I cannot. So the produce is a final hash, and all my books are botches."

Critics have frequently complained about the "sprawling form" of *Moby-Dick*. And even more commonly, they have objected to the apparent

two-stories-in-one, in the same way that some have complained about Faulkner's *The Wild Palms*, a book which includes *The Wild Palms* and *The Old Man*, both of which have been published separately. Melville's book centers on the story of Ahab; the "other story" to which some object is made up of the many chapters devoted to the description and comment on whales and whaling. To some readers this constitutes a violation of unity and detracts from the power of the novel.

But there are three things to be said in answer to this objection:

(1) Melville's greatness as a writer makes whatever he writes compelling in this book; at least to me, there is nothing dull and distracting in his discussion of the internal physiognomy of the whale, or in his taking page after page to classify whales and to discuss the history of the art of whaling. His mastery of language, his Shakesporean vigor and range of his style, and his borrowing from all literature and history for references and comparisons enrich it all.

(2) There are not of course two stories in the book. There is a story about Ahab and a whale; like any other novelist, Melville must give background material to make his book solid and to gain verisimilitude.

(3) The whaling chapters are, to me, not a loss but a gain. And not only for the reason that Melville himself gave for including them: "So ignorant are most landsmen of some of the plainest and most palpable wonders of the world, that without some hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery, they might scout at *Moby-Dick* as a monstrous fable, or still worse and more detestable, a hideous and intolerable allegory." Well, the book is, of course, allegory, if not hideous and intolerable; and it contains those "hints touching the plain facts, historical and otherwise, of the fishery." And what begins as hints soon grows to a seeming overload of extraneous detail. But by the pure audacity of its mass this matter becomes inevitable and right in the novel. Melville has executed a *tour de force* grandly and with nice daring — he has achieved what on the face of it should have been impossible. If anything, it seems that the only vital and reasonable objection is that possibly there is too much of a good thing.

There are other interesting structural qualities about the novel. As in *White Jacket* and *Billy Budd*, Melville in *Moby-Dick* gives us a heterogeneous world, a microcosm aboard a ship. On the *Pequod* are representatives of several races and nationalities: African, English, South Sea Islander, American Indian, American Negro, and American white. In this book Melville is writing about mankind, speaking of universals through disparate particulars. The stylistic and structural result is one of several levels of being, planes contiguous with each other, or interlocking circles — a generous and pleasing pattern. These planes or circles parallel the effect which the interweaving of expository and narrative chapters creates: for in the repeated shift from

narrative to exposition Melville achieves an effect of pulsation, of blow and recoil, which interestingly suggests the capricious and yet reasoned assault and withdrawal of the whale as he toys with the liveboats.

The style itself is mixed and varied, ranging from prosaic exposition through philosophical analysis and from narrative power to the pure lyric. Here is a passage toward the end of the book, not an exception either, which can be written as iambic poetry with no appreciable loss:

Like noiseless nautilus shells their light prows
 sped through the sea
 But only slowly they nearer the foe.
 As they neared him, the ocean grew still more smooth
 Seemed drawing a carpet over its waves
 Seemed a noon-meadow, so serenely it spread.

The conscious manipulation of vowels and consonants, as well as the obvious metrical pattern, is that of the conscious poet.

On the other hand, take a passage from the chapter titled "Cetology": "Of the names on this list of whale authors, only those following Owen ever saw living whales; and but one of them was a real professional harpooneer and whaleman. I mean Captain Scoresby. On the separate subject of the Greenland or Right Whale, he is the best existing authority. But Scoresby knew nothing and says nothing of the great Sperm Whale, compared with which the Greenland Whale is almost unworthy mentioning." Between these levels the style ranges, a symphony in prose. The book is massive; there are styles for all tastes. Whatever else may be said of the novel, I have yet to hear it said that Melville lacks control over the language.

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